

Anaconda Times

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Nurses earn NCO/Soldier of the Quarter

By Pfc. Leah R. Burton

28th Public Affairs Detachment

The atmosphere in which the 13th Corps Support Command Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier of the Quarter thrive is filled with tension, anticipation and sometimes somberness – it's called the Intensive Care Unit at the 31st Combat Support Hospital at Logistical Support Area Anaconda.

NCO of the Quarter

Sgt. Crystal M. Rodriguez, a Beeville, Texas, native and Licensed Practical Nurse with the 31st CSH, enlisted in the Army in September 2000 through the Army Civilian Acquired Skills Program.

"I joined for a few reasons. I felt I needed a challenge. I figured it would be a great opportunity to further my career in nursing, and I wanted my family to excel along with me. I figured I had a lot more to offer than just working in a nursing home," Rodriguez said.

She left her job as a Licensed Vocational Nurse in a nursing home and attended Basic Combat Training at Fort Sill, Okla., in November 2000.

After completing Advanced Individual Training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Rodriguez was assigned to the 249th General Hospital at Fort Gordon, Ga., where she worked as the retention NCOIC, Family Readiness Group coordinator, Combat Lifesaver instructor and Intermediate Care ward master. She also prepared Soldiers for the Primary Leadership Development Course, she said.

In April 2003, Rodriguez relocated to Fort Bliss, Texas, where she was assigned to William Beaumont Army Medical Center. She worked as an LPN in the labor and delivery ward and as a squad leader. She was reassigned to the 31st CSH in December 2003 as a Professional Filler System Soldier and subsequently de-



Photo by Pfc. Leah R. Burton

Sgt. Crystal M. Rodriguez, a Licensed Practical Nurse with the 31st Combat Support Hospital at Logistical Support Area Anaconda, works as the assistant ward master for the intensive care unit. Her skill and professionalism recently earned her NCO of the Quarter.

ployed with the unit in January 2004.

"Sgt. Rodriguez always leads by example and lives by the Army values," said 1st Sgt. Junior Riley, 31st CSH first sergeant. "She always accomplishes every mission assigned to her with total professionalism. Sgt. Rodriguez is a Combat Lifesaver instructor and volunteers her spare time by training Iraqi Civil Defense Corps forces on becoming Basic Combat Lifesavers. She sets the example for all Soldiers to follow."

A prime example of Rodriguez's setting the standard lies in her educational goals and her determination to fulfill those goals.

"Right now, I'm taking correspondence courses and continuing education classes toward my master's degree in

nursing," Rodriguez said. "Here I'm [also] the assistant ward master for the ICU and a squad leader."

Upon redeployment, Rodriguez plans to submit her packet for Drill Sergeant School. "What better job than training Army Soldiers. I know I'd probably be good at it," she said.

Her goals for the future include spending more time with her family.

Soldier of the Quarter

SpC. Celena Ann Ruiz, a Laredo, Texas, native and LPN with the 31st CSH, enlisted in the Army in July 2001, straight out of high school.

"I guess I just wanted to join for something different. I wanted some good

SOLDIERS, Continued on Page 3

Suicide not solution to temporary problems

By Sgt. Ann Venturato
13th COSCOM Public Affairs

There are a lot of myths and facts when it comes to suicide, but early intervention is the key to prevention.

Some facts for Soldiers to remember are that:

- Asking someone about his or her suicidal feelings usually makes the person feel relieved that someone cares
- Nearly 80 percent of those who attempt or commit suicide give some warning of their intentions
- Most suicides are carefully planned and thought about for weeks
- Most suicidal people are undecided about living or dying; they may risk death, yet frequently call for help before and after attempts
- Many suicides occur within three months following the beginning of improvement, often a period of calm may proceed a decision to commit suicide

People can go through different levels before commit suicide.

In the first level, there are suicidal thoughts and a person has destructive ideas or thoughts to die.

"It is addressing that fatalistic thinking, and intervening that can make a difference in that soldier," said Maj. Jean Panich, a psychologist with the 785th Medical Company.

In the second level, there are suicidal gestures where a person commits a deliberate act of self-harm that's not fatal and where death was not the goal.

The third level is a suicide attempt where a person commits a deliberate act of self-harm that's not fatal, however death was the actual goal.

The fourth level is an actual suicide where a person has committed self-inflicted death.

Soldiers need to be aware of some of the risk factors for suicide.

- Males are three to five times more likely to commit suicide than females
- 75 percent of all suicides are committed by white males
- 60 percent of those committing suicide do so with firearms
- Those people who have a past history of attempted suicide are more likely to attempt suicide

Another risk factor is emotional problems such as depression.

A person may have feelings of hopelessness or helplessness, have trouble sleeping, and have changes in appetite among other symptoms.

"Here those factors of hopelessness and helplessness are increased substantially because there is a sense of powerlessness and helplessness in this environment because there are mortar rounds coming in and improvised explosive devices out there. There is a sense of powerlessness about how much you can do to respond to those kind of situations and that is part of the difficulty too," Panich said.

Substance abuse, such as drug abuse and alcoholism, is another risk factor.

Mental illness such as Schizophrenia is also a risk factor.

Stressful events like a death of a loved one, relationship difficulties, employment or financial problems and multiple reoccurring stressors can lead a person to contemplate suicide.

"Generally people are pretty good at hiding stress," said Staff Sgt. Jay Harbeck, a restoration sergeant at 785th Medical Company. "That's why it's important to have a good support system."

An important suicide risk factor to consider is the ready accessibility of firearms to Soldiers.

Harbeck said, some behavior signals to look for when it comes to potential suicide are: giving away prized items, putting affairs in order, writing or revising a will, making funeral arrangements and

writing a suicide note.

Here are some tips on what to do if you see someone who might be suicidal:

Don't leave him or her alone if risk is imminent.

Don't assume the person isn't the type, there is no type.

Don't act shocked at what the person tells you.

Don't debate the morality of suicide.

Don't keep it a secret.

"Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem," said Harbeck.

When it comes to preventing suicide watch for the warning signals, listen, ask questions and get help.

Encourage the person to talk to a physician or a chaplain and continue to be supportive, encouraging continued treatment and self care.

"The 785th Med. Co. offers intervention education and support counseling for Soldiers at building 4116 on Ohio Ave," said Harbeck.

"We do suicide prevention briefings at a unit's request. We have classes to help soldiers cope with stress with classes such as anger management and home front issues."

To speak with someone at the 785th Med. Co., call 558-4970.

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Left Shoulder Diary



81st Regional Readiness Command

Compiled from Unit History

The 81st Regional Readiness Command's shoulder sleeve insignia is characterized by a black wildcat on an olive drab disc edged with a one-eighth of an inch black border. The overall dimension is two and one-fourth inches in diameter.

The insignia was originally approved Oct. 19, 1918, for the 81st Division, but wasn't officially announced until June 29, 1922. It was re-designated for the 81st Infantry Division May 11, 1964, retroactive to Aug. 1, 1942. It was authorized for the 81st U.S. Army Reserve Command April 22, 1968. The insignia was reassigned to the 81st Regional Support Command April 16, 1996 and finally re-designated for the 81st Regional Readiness Command July 16, 2003.

The 81st RRC, located in Birmingham, Ala., is the headquarters for the Army's reserve forces located in eight Southeastern states, except for the Army Special Operations units, and eight Direct Reporting Commands.

The 81st ID landed in Hawaii June 11-July 8, 1944. The Division arrived in Leyte May 17, 1945, and participated in operations in the northwest part of the island. The 81st moved to Japan Sept. 18 and performed occupational duties in Aomori Prefecture until inactivation.

Soldiers win quarterly board

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experiences – maybe to get me ready for college, too,” Ruiz said.

Having enjoyed health and science classes in high school, when her recruiter offered her combat medic, Ruiz ran with it, she said.

She attended basic Combat Training at Fort Jackson, S.C., and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. During AIT, she was recruited to attend the Licensed Practical Nurse course at Fort Gordon's Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Community Hospital.

Upon successful completion of the course, Ruiz was assigned to Fort Hood. “I was working on a Medical-Surgery Floor, taking care of medical and surgical patients,” said Ruiz.

In October 2003, she was assigned to the 31st CSH as a Professional Filler System Soldier. Ruiz deployed to Iraq with the unit in January 2004, where she has worked in the intermediate care ward until her recent transition to the ICU, she said.

“She is a highly respected and skilled nurse caring for U.S. Sol-

diers, coalition forces, civilian contractors, Iraqi civilians, ICDC forces, and enemy prisoners of war.” Riley said. “She possesses the technical knowledge and skills required for providing the highest quality of nursing care. Spc. Ruiz has earned the respect of her superiors, peers and subordinates by displaying the attributes of a strong young leader.”

Her educational goals include completing her bachelor's degree and applying for the Army's Green to Gold program, Riley said.

“When I was at Fort Hood, I was taking classes at (Central Texas College). I was going for general studies then was going to transfer to a university to do pre-med,” said Ruiz.

She recently married and plans to have children upon redeployment. Even with missing her husband and family, Ruiz remains mission-oriented.

“We're doing good things for Soldiers and Iraqis – really helping them out, giving them care. I don't think it's easy out here, but we do it, and we do a good job,” Ruiz said.

Driving for a living

Throughout military history logisticians have been the unsung heroes of warfare providing the beans, bullets and bandages that keep Armies on the move. Never has this been clearer than it is in Iraq today where truck drivers are just as likely to engage in daily combat as infantryman and convoys are called combat logistics patrols for a reason.

In the coming weeks, the Anaconda Times will inaugurate its new, expanded format with a series on the military truck driver. We will also look at how soldiers have applied common sense solutions to issues such as the need for more “gun-trucks” and up-armored vehicles.

On May 22, look for the first issue of our new 16-page tabloid edition, with 5,000 copies available throughout LSA Anaconda and electronic distribution through CSM channels continuing as before. In order to prepare for production, there will be no paper the week of 17 May.

— The AT Staff

COMMENTARY

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Makings of 'Our Joint Team'

**By Chief Master Sgt.
Daniel L. France**
332d Air Expeditionary Wing

We've got a great team here at LSA Anaconda, also known as Balad Air Base, Iraq. It's the magnificent Soldiers, airmen, sailors and Marines – who are deployed and work daily to help make our location and operation better for those that follow us that – make this team so great.

Basically, our ever-evolving joint operations are being reviewed from the highest levels of the Department of Defense to see where we can continue to develop our joint environment ... the test bed and learning laboratory is here with us at LSA Anaconda.

They're looking at our progress in such areas as Airfield Operations, where Army, Marines and Air Force members sit side-by-side performing airfield management and airfield tower operations.

In fact, Soldiers assigned to the 332d Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron actually live in the Air Force compound. It's become a symbol of our unity in a joint environment, both working and living together as a unit.

You will find our joint firefighting team composed of Soldiers and Airmen tasked with fire prevention and safety. These professionals are all trained to the same DoD standard at Goodfellow AFB, Texas, helping to make it much easier to integrate in any environment; specifically in a combat

environment. Again, all of these Soldiers and Airmen live, train and work jointly within the confines of their encampment.

The Joint Defense Operations Center is yet another operation where synergy and teamwork ensure the safety and operational capability of our forces in and around LSA Anaconda.



The nerve center for our base defense mechanism, we continue efforts to merge developing technologies between our operations to help keep the bad guys away.

Our team of Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force cargo experts ensure the smoothest of cargo movement actions here daily. We wouldn't support the cargo movement requirements here without each other, which is proven time and time again. In fact, strategic airlift is the cornerstone of our logistics pipeline success in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The 732d Expeditionary Mission Support Group provides the support mechanism requested by the Army to run convoy defense operations, engineering needs and petroleum oil

and lubricant missions on main supply routes and forward area refueling point locations within Iraq. A common, yet warm term within this massive operation is a reference toward our "Soldier Airmen" now doing the work of our Army brothers and sisters who have redeployed to home station for a much deserved reconstitution and training

opportunity. They have a great mission to support and big shoes to fill with the standard our Army friends have set.

The joint horizon is bright as well, with many more opportunities to consider in this rapidly developing move toward a more united military service. Other joint initiatives being considered, based on efficiencies and common sense capabilities, are vehicle maintenance, Explosive Ordnance Division,

education services, Public Affairs, Protocol, and many more. But we can't make any of these progressive moves without your knowing and understanding on how and why this is good for our services and good for our national interests.

Get smart on the subject of joint operations and the efficiencies gained by doing so. I also ask you to ask questions of other service members when you join them for a meal at the dining facility.

It's important to know each other and better understand cultures unique to each service because in the end this understanding helps to make us a better team in a joint environment and better equipped for the joint future within our military services.

LIFESTYLES

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QUESTION OF THE WEEK

What do you miss most about your mother?



**Airman 1st Class
Kullen Harris
2632nd AEF TC**

"I miss the way she sings to wake me up on Sundays before service."



**Senior Airman
Melinda Cabera
332nd ECES**

"I miss spending time and being with my mom."



**Pfc. Patrick Semoy
369th TC**

"I miss the way she's always there for me. I miss talking, sharing my problems, and expressing my feeling to her."



**Spc. David Wessel
3625th Maintenance Co.**

"I miss a lot of things about my mom but the things I miss most are the way she brings life to the entire family."



**Spc. Patrick Maulolo
Co. A, 181st SPT BN**

"I miss my mother's island cooking. My favorite dish is cooked taro with coconut milk."

Armed Forces Entertainment Presents **COMICS ON DUTY**

Five comedians provide live, hilarious entertainment for service members serving in Iraq. The comedic troop is scheduled to perform

May 15-16

Comics on Duty will appear at the Sustainer Theater.



**Spc. Sara Jennerman
339th MP Co.**

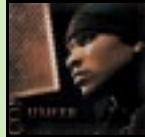
"I miss my mom stopping by, helping me clean my house or go shopping with me. I miss little things like that."

LIFESTYLES

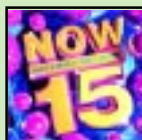
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Billboard Top 20 Albums



1. D12, **D12 World**
2. Usher, **Confessions**
3. Prince, **Musicology**
4. Diana Krall, **The Girl In The Other Room**
5. Mario Winans, **Hurt No More**
6. Various Artists, **Now 15**
7. Hoobastank, **The Reason**
8. Kanye West, **The College Dropout**
9. Evanescence, **Fallen**
10. Various Artists, **American Idol Season 3**
11. Norah Jones, **Feels Like Home**
12. Jessica Simpson, **In The Skin**
13. Guns N' Roses, **Greatest Hits**
14. Outkast, **Speakerboxxx/The Love Below**
15. Kenny Chesney, **When The Sun Goes Down**
16. Lil' Flip, **U Gotta Feel Me**
17. Beyonce, **Beyonce: Live at Wembley**
18. Josh Groban, **Closer**
19. Maroon5, **Songs About Jane**
20. Alicia Keys, **The Diary Of Alicia Keys**



Weekly Religious Schedule

Anaconda Chapel (One block west of Mosque at Hawk St. and New Jersey Ave. in Small Chapel Tent)

Friday

- 1:30 p.m. Islamic Prayer
- 5 p.m. Jewish Torah Study
- 6 p.m. Jewish Prayer

Saturday

- 1 p.m. Choir Practice (General Protestant)
- 8:30 p.m. Choir Practice (Gospel)

Sunday

- 8:30 a.m. Lutheran
- 10 a.m. Latter Day Saints
- 7 p.m. Roman Catholic Mass

Sustainer Indoor Theater

Sunday

- 9 a.m. Protestant (General)
- 10 a.m. Roman Catholic Mass
- 11:30 a.m. Protestant (Gospel)

31st Combat Support Hospital Church (One block north of Turner indoor swimming pool)

Sunday

- 9:30 a.m. Protestant
- Noon Roman Catholic Mass

Air Force Chapel (Air Force Chapel across from PAX and Redeployment tents)

Sunday

- 8:45 a.m. Sunday School
- 10:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship
- Noon Roman Catholic Mass
- 5:30 p.m. Protestant
- 7 p.m. Latter Day Saints

82nd Airborne Chapel (Building 4148 south of AAFES Exchange)

Wednesday

- 7 p.m. Protestant

Saturday

- 9:30 a.m. Christian Orthodox
- 7 p.m. Roman Catholic Mass

Sunday

- 11 a.m. Protestant
- 7 p.m. Protestant

185th Aviation Group Chapel (Across from DFAC #4 on Texas Street)

Sunday

- 8:30 a.m. Roman Catholic Mass
- 9:30 a.m. Christian Praise
- 11 a.m. Protestant
- 2 p.m. Lutheran

SPORTS

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Air Force soars over Army

By Pfc. Abel Trevino

28th Public Affairs Detachment

The American pastime came to LSA Anaconda May 7 with the final bout of the "One Pitch" softball tournament being a championship match between two services – the Air Force's softball team and the Army's 29th Signal Battalion, Alpha Company (Avengers) team.

The Avengers, who played in the inaugural game at the softball field just two days prior, made their way through the competition to finish the job they started. Unfortunately, they fell short on their mission with a devastating defeat of 4-13.

Spirits were still high despite the loss.

"We're still the best team in the Army," said Avengers Coach Anthony Torres to his team after the loss.

From start to finish, the game was dominated by the Air Force, with the third inning being the hour of power courtesy of their seven runs scored in the single inning. When the fourth inning started, the Air Force held a monumental 13-1 lead.

Air Force Coach Ernest Jones didn't let the overwhelming lead get to his head though.

"Softball is a weird game, you get big innings, it can swing both ways," Jones said.

Fanfare didn't waiver either.

"It's alright [that the Army team was down]. The boys are doing good; we still have some innings," said Amanda Clark, Army fan.

The Avengers tried hard to catch up, but when the dust settled the final score was Avengers 4, Air Force 13.

"Basically we just played well together," Jones said modestly on his team's victory. "We've got the good hitting, the good fielding, it's been a great day all around. A little bit of luck helps too."

After the unprecedented defeat, Torres vowed to avenge his team's loss.

"This ain't over, we're going to see them again. We aim high as well, hooah," Torres said.



Photo by Pfc. Abel Trevino

Right outfielder Byong Yu of the 29th Signal Battalion Avengers, races to pick up a ground ball. After defeating the 226th Medical Logistics Battalion team in the inaugural game two days prior, they were defeated in the first championship game at the LSA Anaconda softball field by the Air Force team with a devastating 13-4 loss.

PHOTOS

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Pvt. Murphy's Law

By Mark Baker



Photo by Pfc. Abel Trevino
Spc. Evelyn Alicea, 3625th Maintenance Company, contributes to a Mother's Day article via a SAT phone with a Chicago Tribune reporter. She said to her 4-year-old child last January, "Everytime you see the American flag, just think of mommy at work."



Photo by Pfc. Abel Trevino

The Soldiers from 3rd Brigade (Stryker), 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, Company B, third platoon, second squad are shown here in front of their Stryker vehicle. In the last two weeks, the Soldiers have travelled across Iraq, ensuring the safety of convoys leaving and coming to LSA Anaconda.